FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Interparliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

4 – 6 March, Riga

The Interparliamentary Conference,

Having regard to the decision of the Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments taken in April 2012 in Warsaw regarding the establishment and mandate of this Conference;

Having regard to Title II of Protocol I (and Article 9) of the Treaty of Lisbon regarding the promotion of effective and regular interparliamentary cooperation within the Union;

Cognisant of the new powers and instruments foreseen by the Treaty of Lisbon for the European Union (EU) institutions in the area of the foreign, security and defence policy; being aware that the new instruments create better opportunities for the EU to wield an international influence commensurate with its political and economic weight;

Conscious of the multi-layered decision-making process in the areas of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP); aware that effective implementation of these policies must involve numerous policy actors at both the EU and national levels; conscious of the responsibility to engage in parliamentary scrutiny at the respective levels and advance interparliamentary cooperation in the areas of CFSP and CSDP;

Aware that the evolution of the international scenario has strengthened the role of the Parliaments as central actors of global decision making, with specific reference to conflicts and crises.

Highlights of the Common Foreign and Security Policy

1. Acknowledging that the crises in and around Europe have ended the illusion of guaranteed peace for Europe, expresses its utmost concern for the changed security landscape from Ukraine to the Middle East and Africa; welcomes the commitment of the High Representative/Vice President (HRVP), on the basis of the mandate from the European Council of December 2013, to initiate as a matter of priority a process of strategic reflection of the EU's framework for the foreign and security policy in close consultation with the Member States and the parliaments of the EU; insists that this reflection should lead, following consultation with the European Parliament and National Parliaments, to a new European Security Strategy; remains convinced that the Interparliamentary Conference for the CFSP and the CSDP should contribute to this important strategic reflection.

2. Strongly condemns the murder of opposition leader Boris Nemtsov and calls for a clear commitment by the Russian Government to ensure a full, rapid and transparent international investigation of the crime.

Fight against International Terrorism and Regional Radicalisation

3. Strongly condemns the barbaric terrorist attacks in France, Denmark and other countries; expresses its deepest condolences to the relatives of the victims; emphasises that freedom of speech is an essential fundamental freedom embedded in the foundation of the EU and that attacks in Paris and Copenhagen are to be regarded as attacks on the fundamental values of the EU; strongly condemns any form of anti-Semitism and islamophobia; underlines the need for a unified EU stance and an effective and comprehensive preventive approach, more efficient use of the existing resources such as Europol, as well as enhanced cooperation between the Member States in the field of intelligence sharing to tackle the radicalisation and recruitment of EU citizens, as well as early identification and containment of foreign fighters and terrorists, according to the UNSC Resolution 2178 (2014).

4. Calls with urgency for renewed efforts, in particular through global partnership and in a close cooperation with Muslim countries in the region, to fight the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (*Da'esh*) and various Al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorist organisations in the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA).

5. Is concerned about the decreasing level of security in Syria, Iraq and Libya where, as a result of the civil wars and activity of the *Da'esh*, the humanitarian situation has deteriorated to a catastrophic level; emphasises that the expansion of the *Da'esh* has turned these countries into a safe haven for Islamic radicals, thus posing a threat to the entire MENA region, as well as significantly increasing terrorism and security risks for Europe; welcomes the recent military operations conducted by the international coalition, Iraqi army and Kurdish *peshmerga* fighters in Iraq and recognises their contribution to the international coalition; condemns the barbaric killing of the Coptic Christians in Libya and any form of persecution towards religious minorities by *Da'esh*, as well as the repeated acts of violence towards women; strongly condemns the destruction of cultural and archaeological heritage in Iraq and Syria, including targeted destruction of religious sites and objects; welcomes the Joint Communication by the Commission and the HRVP, containing elements regarding EU's regional strategy for Syria and Iraq, as well as the *Da'esh* threat, as an important step towards a fully shared and coordinated EU reaction.

6. Calls for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Libya; underlines that there is no military solution to the conflict and that the current multidimensional crisis must be resolved in the framework of an all-inclusive political dialogue by setting a roadmap on forming a unity government; welcomes the UN-facilitated political dialogue process started in Geneva; calls on international partners – the UN, the EU, the African Union and the League of Arab States – to ensure broader mutual coordination and to work with neighbouring countries with the aim to end proxy wars; notes with concern the growing rise of the radical jihadism in Libya; calls on all external parties to refrain from actions that might exacerbate current divisions and undermine Libya's democratic transition, to strictly respect the arms embargo and to fully support the UN-led dialogue process; calls for individually targeted sanctions against parties boycotting the UN-led talks; welcomes Egypt's efforts to protect Christians against violence motivated by religious prejudice.

7. Draws the attention of the EU and the international community to the escalation of violence by the terrorist group *Boko Haram* in Nigeria and categorically condemns the terrifying crimes against innocent civilians, as well as draws the attention to the recently increased activity of this terrorist group in the neighbouring countries, namely Cameroon, Chad and Niger; welcomes the recent initiative of the African Union to create the Multinational Joint Task Force to fight *Boko Haram* militants; in this context underlines its concern about the postponement of the elections in Nigeria; calls for the elections to be held as soon as possible and with a strong democratic participation and transparency**.**

8. Welcomes the initiative of the Latvian Presidency to address the issue of terrorism and foreign fighters during the informal meeting of Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs in Riga on 29 and 30 January 2015, where the ministers concluded that the threats to EU's internal security should be addressed in the framework of the European Agenda on Security, e.g., strengthening efforts on prevention of radicalisation,

particularly in social media, sharing information on terrorism prevention within the EU and strengthening judicial cooperation in the fight against the terrorism.

9. Calls on the governments and societies of EU Member States to remain united and to prevent accusation and stigmatisation of particular religious groups, thus to hinder terrorists from attaining their goal of intimidating and dividing Europeans.

Situation in Ukraine

10. Reaffirms unwavering support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine; unequivocally condemns the occupation and annexation of Crimea by Russia, which has violated the UN Charter, international law and its own commitments, including the ones under the Helsinki Final Act of the OSCE and the 1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances to Ukraine; reaffirms the respective European Council Conclusions underlining the importance of the EU in pursuing a policy of non-recognition regarding the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol; expresses great concern for deteriorating situation with regard to human rights and freedom of expression, as well as the continuing persecution and intimidation of the Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian community.

11. Condemns the hybrid warfare conducted by Russia in the Eastern regions of Ukraine and notes the evidence of a continued support given to the separatists by Russia.

12. Calls for full implementation of the Agreements reached in Minsk that in particular provide for a ceasefire, an exchange of prisoners and withdrawal of heavy weapons; is concerned by the continuing violations of the ceasefire and urges an immediate cessation of all military activities; calls on Russia to take real steps towards de-escalating the crisis in the Eastern Ukraine and to abide by the Minsk Agreements, which, inter alia, provide for a complete ceasefire and withdrawal of heavy weapons, as well as cessation of the transfer of weapons and armed combatants across the border from Russia to Ukraine, withdrawal of Russian armed forces and mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine, setting up a permanent monitoring of the Ukraine-Russia border by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, restoring to Ukrainian authorities a full control over Ukraine's border with Russia, freeing all hostages and illegally detained persons, such as pilot Nadia Savchenko, as well as the restoration of Ukraine's control over its whole territory, including Crimea.

13. Welcomes the decision of the extraordinary EU Foreign Affairs Council of 29 January 2015 to extend sanctions to persons and entities threatening or undermining Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity; indicates that the decision of the EU to ease, lift or increase sanctions imposed against Russia will directly depend on the implementation by Russia of its commitments under the Minsk Agreements; in the case of any further Russian actions destabilising Ukraine, invites the European Council to take further restrictive measures and broaden their scope; in this regard notes that further preparatory work has to be undertaken by the Commission and the EEAS on any appropriate action.

14. Emphasises that a sustainable and peaceful solution to the conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk regions in Ukraine can be achieved only by political means and diplomatic negotiations; notes the need to keep the channels of communication with Russia open; acknowledges that these relations shall be based on the respect for international law.

15. In view of the new threats posed by the massive and comprehensive propaganda of Russia, expresses support for developing a common EU communication strategy which would enable the EU to effectively counter disinformation campaigns carried out in such an information war; welcomes the decision of the extraordinary EU Foreign Affairs Council of 29 January 2015 to task the HRVP to step up efforts, in cooperation with Member States and EU institutions, to further improve strategic communication in support of EU policies and to explore options for the establishment of a dedicated communication team to lead these actions.

16. Encourages Ukraine to maintain a strong focus and make progresses on the key reform areas by further stabilising the political, economic, social, judicial and financial situation in the country, in particular by implementing constitutional reform and fighting corruption; emphasises the key role played by the EU in supporting the Ukrainian reform efforts, including by financial and technical means.

European Neighbourhood

17. Underscores that both the Eastern and Southern dimension of the EU Neighbourhood Policy are equally important and should be supported without an unnecessary competition between them; recognises that, in the light of the new political and military challenges in both principal bordering regions, the EU has to substantially revise its policy towards its neighbourhood by, inter alia, placing a greater emphasis on establishing closer cooperation with inhabitants and civic society.

Eastern Partnership: Towards the Riga Summit

18. Reiterates the decisive strategic role of the Eastern Partnership policy in supporting security, stability, economic and social development, the rule of law and democracy in the EU's neighbourhood; emphasises that, despite regional challenges, the Eastern Partnership remains a top priority in EU’s foreign policy; points out that the Eastern Partnership must continue to serve as a joint political platform which offers differentiated approaches to the partnership countries according to their individual aspirations in relations with the EU, also by acknowledging the European perspective, and that in accordance with Article 49 of the TEU any European country may apply to become member of the EU provided it adheres to the Copenhagen criteria and principles of democracy, respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights; notes the necessity to help modernise democratic governance, strengthen the rule of law, reform public administration and undertake economic reforms in all the partner countries.

19. Expects the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga on 21 – 22 May 2015 to provide a good opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved since the Vilnius Summit and, whilst reconfirming commitment to the Eastern Partnership policy, its further development and deepening, highlights the need to assess the progress in implementing the Association Agreements during the Riga Summit; and therefore encourages National Parliaments to finalise the ratification of the EU Association Agreements with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova before the Riga Summit.

20. Calls on the Riga Summit to provide strong and motivating political support for the most ambitious partner countries that have achieved the greatest progress in their reform process by acknowledging their European perspective and offering them a new deepened cooperation opportunities with the EU, based on a differentiated approach; also urges adoption of an individualised approach to the EU’s bilateral relations with partner countries that have chosen a less ambitious level of cooperation.

21. Notes that progress in the mobility area with the Eastern Partnership countries is one of the deliverables expected by the partner countries from the Riga Summit; hopes that the second stage of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan with Georgia and Ukraine will be completed, and that the possibility to sign the Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreement and the Mobility Partnership with Belarus and to achieve progress towards visa liberalisation with Armenia and Azerbaijan will be successfully used until the Summit.

Southern Neighbourhood: The situation in the Mediterranean and the Middle East

22. Highlights the utmost importance of the MENA region, which, due to its geographic and cultural proximity to the EU, has a direct impact on the EU Member States in the event of any conflicts or instability; underlines the increasing spread of the irregular migration and human trafficking in the Mediterranean region, which not only poses a threat to the security of the external borders of the EU, but also claims countless victims; expresses its deepest condolences for the victims of sea tragedies; takes note of the Commission's decision to

extend the European initiative "Operation Triton" until December 2015; underlines the necessity for a more functional management of migration flows, while urgently addressing current humanitarian emergency, sea rescue operations and refugees in a coordinated manner; decides to follow-up on migration issues at a workshop in Luxembourg.

23. Emphasises that, in light of the increasing security threats within the region, the Neighbourhood Policy must be capable of providing an effective, united and sustainable support to its neighbours on the South of the Mediterranean by focusing on providing assistance in forming a democratic system of governance, developing a civic society and fostering people-to-people contacts.

24. Commends the Union for the Mediterranean as the most efficient and multifaceted cooperation forum in the region, aimed at promoting regional cohesion and integration between the EU and Southern Mediterranean countries.

25. Concurs with the Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council of 19 January 2015 on Tunisia welcoming the successful and peaceful democratic path Tunisia has taken, as well as congratulating Tunisia on its presidential and parliamentary elections; notes that the democratic transition in Tunisia is becoming an example for the entire region; calls for the development of a comprehensive political and economic cooperation and a support plan to consolidate Tunisia's new-born democracy.

26. Expresses hope that parliamentary elections in Egypt scheduled for March and April 2015 will proceed in accordance with the general democratic principles, ensuring freedom of expression and assembly with due consideration for the position and participation of women, and will be a significant step towards reunifying society; considers the recent decision of Egyptian President to attend a Coptic Christmas service for the first time in history of the state as a positive signal for the social reconciliation which should be extended to all other faiths; calls on Egypt to refrain from executing imposed death penalties and imposing new ones.

27. Expresses concern about the deteriorating security situation in Yemen resulting from the offensive of *Houthi* rebels which has provoked the resignation of the President of Yemen, the Yemeni Prime Minister and his Cabinet; encourages and supports a peaceful transition in Yemen.

28. Expresses deep concern about the humanitarian situation in Gaza and tensions on Israeli borders that highlight the need for urgent resumption of credible peace negotiations; underlines that there is no alternative for a two-state solution to be reached through direct peace negotiations, and considers the EP Resolution of 17 December 2014 on Palestinian statehood an important step in this direction; emphasises that all parties, including regional actors, should work towards this aim and help to achieve a sustainable solution in the Middle East Peace Process.

29. Condemns the brutal violence used by the Assad regime against Syrian citizens, and calls for stepping-up the pressure to bring about a genuine political transition in Syria, including by increasing support to the moderate Syrian opposition; welcomes the efforts of the UN Special Envoy to achieve a strategic de-escalation of violence.

30. Considering that environmental threats can also cause important security challenges, follows with concern Turkey's intention to develop a nuclear plant in Akkuyu - a highly seismic region on its Southern Mediterranean coast; invites the European Commission to raise the issue in the next round of the pre-accession talks with Turkey.

Jēkaba iela 11, Rīga, LV-1811, Latvia • Phone: (+371) 67087314 • E-mail: presidency@saeima.lv

31. Stresses that the CFSP and the future revised European Security Strategy can be fully effective only if they are underpinned by a credible Common Security and Defence Policy, as well as timely, effective and full implementation of the Conclusions of the European Council on Defence of December 2013; in this respect welcomes the commitment of the new HRVP, in her capacity as the Head of the European Defence Agency, to make this a key priority during her tenure; recalls its determination to follow closely the progress in this area and calls for tangible results ahead of the next European Council dedicated to this topic in June 2015; reiterates that an annual meeting of the European Council on this topic, as well as regular meetings of the Council on Defence, could further support progress in this area.

32. Supports the HRVP's ambition to review the European Security Strategy (2003), which, along with the European Parliament and the National Parliaments, should broadly involve wider foreign and security policy community participation; underlines the need to redefine the role and security interests of the EU in the constantly evolving security environment by taking into account the recent threats posed by radical movements and break-down of the rule-based international order, as well as the level of ambition for further development of the CSDP, inter alia, in developing the defence capabilities.

33. Recalls, after the European Council of December 2013, that the EU with its CSDP and other instruments has a strong role to play through its unique comprehensive approach to preventing and managing conflicts and their causes; stresses the importance of enabling the EU to assume increased responsibilities as a security provider at the international level and in particular in its neighbourhood, thereby also enhancing its own security and its role as a strategic global actor; emphasises the importance of cooperation between the EU and its partners, in particular the UN, NATO, the OSCE and the African Union, as well as strategic partners and partner countries in its neighbourhood, with due respect to the institutional framework and decision-making autonomy of the EU.

34. Emphasises the need to continue to strengthen EU-NATO cooperation and coordination, especially in defence capability development and synchronising military exercises; notes that the Transatlantic cooperation has geopolitical importance with a great potential to strengthen European security as the Member States of both organisations are facing new security challenges; in view of the fact that most Member States maintain armed forces that participate in both NATO- and EU-led crisis management operations, reiterates, however, the need to respect the security policies of those EU Member States which are not NATO members; underlines the importance of ensuring strengthened cooperation in order to ensure that the tools employed to achieve the CSDP and NATO objectives are compatible and that defence capabilities should be further strengthened and developed through projects that are complementary rather than overlapping.

35. Recalls the necessity to strengthen the EU´s civilian crisis management structures bearing in mind the fact that the majority of CSDP missions are civilian ones with a steadily growing demand thereof; notes the existing problem of staffing those civilian CSDP missions with personnel from the Member States; suggests to follow-up on this issue at the workshop in Luxembourg in the context of implementation of Conclusions of the upcoming June European Council.

36. Urges Member States to realize that only through real and intensive cooperation Europe will be able to build its own defence capacity in order to strengthen our sovereignty; highlights the need to increase the number of Pooling & Sharing projects in implementing the CSDP; welcomes successful Pooling & Sharing projects launched with the support from the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the EU Military Committee (incl. the use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) in line with international humanitarian law, government satellite communications, Air-to-air refuelling (AAR), as well as developing Cyber Defence capability); urges the Member States to use this opportunity by focusing on systematic medium- and long-term cooperation and by exploring the benefits of the Pooling & Sharing initiative before developing their own capabilities.

37. Considering that further developing of deployable rapid response capabilities is crucial and will require more interoperability, more combined training and most of all regular evaluation of readiness standards,

underlines that the EUBGs and NATO's NRF and VJTF concepts should be seen as complimentary and not as competing structures; points to the role of EU Battlegroups, which, though yet to be deployed, raise levels of interoperability and readiness of armed forces and could serve as an important tool for implementing an aspect of the CSDP; calls on the Member States to consider by default the deployment of EU Battlegroup as an initial entry force where Member States have decided that a military rapid response is appropriate; underlines the need to adopt a modular concept for the deployment of EU Battlegroups in order to create a more flexible European capability which can operate as a force for rapid intervention and stabilisation operations in crisis areas; encourages the European Council to find a constructive and permanent solution for financial arrangements of EU Battlegroups deployment based on the ATHENA mechanism provisions*;* calls on the HRVP to come up with proposals by the June European Council on how to improve EU Battlegroups by taking into account the Conclusions of this Conference; decides to follow-up on implementation of Conclusions of the June European Council on defence at a workshop in Luxembourg.

38. Encourages the Member States to organise themselves in order to start identifying capabilities that will be needed to undertake missions that the Foreign Affairs Council may decide to entrust to a group of Member States willing to perform this role, and to evaluate methods and procedures to jointly manage those tasks.

39. Underlines the new security challenges posed by the so-called 4th generation warfare - a hybrid war which is manifested as a combination of unconventional and conventional military methods, elements of cyber, economic and information warfare, as well as political pressure; stresses the need to strengthen the EU's resilience against challenges of the hybrid warfare by creating better civil-military synergies as well as the need to increase dedicated Member States capabilities, including strategic communication and securing EU's external borders; invites the EU to further explore possibilities to improve strategic communication and coordinate its efforts with the Alliance (i.e. the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Riga, Latvia).

40. Stresses the need to carry out a review of the existing ATHENA financing mechanism, as foreseen by the Council Decision of 19 December 2011, notably on the scope of common funding; takes note of the on-going work within the Council in this respect; invites the Council to start working on the definition of a simplified mechanism within ATHENA mechanism for the financing of common costs related to implementation of missions undertaken under Articles 43, 44 and 46 of the TEU.

41. Recalls the commitment of EU Member States to increase defence research and technology spending to 2% of all defence expenditure and calls on the Member States to live up to these ambitions; welcomes the launch of a pilot project on CSDP research and the initial work on a preparatory action seeking synergies, especially by using the European Defence Agency, with national research programmes.

42. Reminds that, given the increasing security challenges and threats, it is of paramount importance to ensure that the EU is capable of fully assuming its responsibilities within the international community and underlines the need to implement the relevant TEU provisions, in particular the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO); calls on the HRVP to be fully and proactively involved in proceedings related to implementation of permanent structured cooperation under Article 42 (6) of the TEU.

43. Welcomes the HRVP's commitment to work closely with the European Parliament and National Parliaments to ensure that EU's foreign policy is focussed on delivering security, democracy, human rights, stability and hope for a prosperous future for the citizens of Europe; welcomes the opportunity to work with the HRVP on further strengthening dialogue and cooperation between parliamentarians and the HRVP on important matters discussed at this Conference.